

**WAS ABŪ DHARR AL-GHIFĀRĪ “EXILED” TO AL-RABADHA?  
A Review on the Relations between Caliph ʿUthmān and Abū  
Dharr al-Ghifārī**

Halil İbrahim Hançabay  
*Uludağ University, Bursa-Turkey*

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**Abstract**

The period after the Prophet Muḥammad is significant in many respects. In particular, the events that took place during the time of the third caliph ʿUthmān, have a distinct importance because they had a profound impact on the future development of Islamic society. An important aspect of this period that affected political, religious, and social life during Islamic history was the relation between Caliph ʿUthmān and Abū Dharr, which resulted in Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha. There are significant differences in the narratives related to these events. In some accounts, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request, whereas in others, he was sent into exile by the Caliph ʿUthmān because he protested his regime for corruption. This article aims to examine the relations between Caliph Uthmān and Abū Dharr in three steps: Abū Dharr’s leaving to Damascus; the events that occurred between Abū Dharr and Muʿāwiya; Abū Dharr’s coming back to Medina and then leaving (or being exiled) to al-Rabadha.

*Key Words:* Caliph ʿUthmān, Abū Dharr, al-Rabadha, exile, *fitna*

Historians generally divide Caliph ʿUthmān’s reign (644-656) into six “good” years and six “bad” years. The events from around the year 30/650-651 which occurred in the second six-year term are significant in many respects because they had a profound impact on the future development of Islamic society. In particular the events that took

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place between Caliph ʿUthmān (d. 35/656) and Abū Dharr (d. 32/653) and that resulted in Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha<sup>1</sup> deserve consideration. First, it should be noted that there are significant differences between the narratives related to these events. However, it is accepted by historians that Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha due to criticism, but at first sight it seems unclear whether he went upon his own request or was sent into exile by the Caliph. According to some narratives, the reason he was sent to al-Rabadha as an exile was that he expressed criticism toward Caliph ʿUthmān because he changed the Sunna of the Prophet and the policy of the previous two caliphs, and because of his donation from *bayt al-māl* to his close relatives. In addition Abū Dharr criticized Muslims who were hoarding wealth. In the narratives of the exile it is argued that some prominent *ṣaḥāba* such as ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf (d. 32/652) criticized Caliph ʿUthmān due to his attitude towards Abū Dharr. According to the other narratives Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, then left to al-Rabadha on his own request.

## I

In the historical sources there are two different groups of narratives of Abū Dharr's arrival to Damascus. According to the first group by Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571/1176), Abū Dharr was residing in Medina. He had come to this region (*Bilād al-Shām*) to participate in the conquest of Palestine, and he met Caliph ʿUmar in Jābiya.<sup>2</sup> He subsequently went to Damascus.<sup>3</sup> The second group of accounts says that,

<sup>1</sup> Al-Rabadha was a village located a three day distance from the Iraqi side of Medina; see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Shihāb al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977), III, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Jābiya, a city eighty kilometers south of Damascus, is situated in Jawlān, not far from the site of modern Nawā. It was used as an administrative center in the time of the Ghassānids. In Islamic period, it was conquered during the time of Caliph Abū Bakr (d. 13/634) and became a military base (*jund*) of this region. The importance of Jābiya increased during the time of Caliph ʿUmar (d. 23/644) and he visited there to decide upon conditions in the new conquests. A meeting of the generals and principal officers was held there and has remained famous with the name *yawm al-Jābiya*; see Henri Lammens and J. Sourdell-Thomine, "al-Djābiya," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, II, 360; Mustafa Fayda, "Cābiye," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, VI, 538.

<sup>3</sup> Abū l-Qāsim Thiqaṭ al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Hibat Allāh Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārikh madīnat Dimashq* (ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū Saʿīd ʿUmar ibn Gharāma al-ʿAmrawī; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), LXVI, 174; also see Abū l-Fidāʾ ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn

Caliph ʿUthmān had sent Abū Dharr to Damascus a second time. There are three different narratives. According to the first narrative by al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892-893), Abū Dharr settled in Damascus where his *maktab*<sup>4</sup> was and in the time of the pilgrimage he came to Medina. However after the pilgrimage he did not return to Damascus and began to live in Medina. When he saw that the buildings reached to Sal<sup>5</sup> he asked ʿUthmān for permission to leave Medina for Damascus.<sup>6</sup> According to the second narrative Caliph ʿUthmān heard that Abū Dharr said “ʿUthmān has changed the Sunna of the Prophet and the policy of the previous two caliphs.” Because of this, he sent him as an exile to Damascus, near Muʿāwiya.<sup>7</sup> According to the third narrative quoted by al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956), Abū Dharr went to Damascus,

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ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, 1966), VII, 165. In the historical sources, any information is not provided about Abū Dharr’s life in the time between the death of the Prophet and the end of the caliphate of Abū Bakr. As for the time of Caliph ʿUmar, according to Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam who rests on the *diwān* records, Abū Dharr was present at Heliopolis, 19 AH, and at Alexandria, 21 AH. In the same year he was posted to the garrison at al-Fuṣṭāṭ; see Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam al-Miṣrī, *Kitāb futūḥ Miṣr wa-akbbārūhā* (ed. Charles C. Torrey; Leiden: Brill, 1920), 94, 130, and 284. In the following years Abū Dharr and his nephew, ʿAbd al-Allāh ibn al-Ṣāmit, attended to the army commanded by Muʿāwiya which conquered Amorium in 23 AH and Cyprus in 28 AH. See Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (ed. ʿAbd Allāh Anīs al-Ṭabbāʿ; Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Maʿārif, 1987), 210-211; Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī (Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk)* (ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm; 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1967), IV, 241; *The History of al-Ṭabarī: An Annotated Translation, vol. XIV: The Conquest of Iran A.D. 641-643/A.H. 21-23* (translated into English and annotated by G. Rex Smith; Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 164.

<sup>4</sup> Abū Dharr was recorded at *Dīwān al-Shām*.

<sup>5</sup> Sal<sup>6</sup> is a hill on the outskirts of Medina; see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam*, III, 240-241. Al-Maqdisī called that place Sayf; see Abū Naṣr al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-badʿ wa-l-tārīkh* (ed. Clément Huart; Baghdad: Maktabat al-Muthannā, n.d.), V, 94-95.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-asbrāf* (ed. S. D. F. Goitein; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press, 1936), 52-53.

<sup>7</sup> Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb Ishāq ibn Jaʿfar ibn Wahb ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1960), II, 171. Della Vida also has argued that Abū Dharr was exiled to Syria with some of his companions; see G. Levi Della Vida [R. G. Khoury], “ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, X, 948.

because Caliph ʿUthmān posed a question in a gathering, which Kaʿb al-Akḥbār (d. 32/652-53) attended, asking whether anyone else has the right to the property of a person who gives alms. Kaʿb expressed the opinion that no one had has this right. The Caliph posed another question asking whether it is lawful to spend funds from *bayt al-māl* for themselves. Kaʿb replied that there is nothing wrong with that. Abū Dharr became enraged because of these responses and struck his chest while raising his stick. His words are recorded: “Oh son of a Jew! What leads you to talk about our religion?” ʿUthmān who was uncomfortable due to these words reacted against him and said “Oh Abū Dharr! How much are you paining us? Get out of my sight.” Because of the Caliph’s attitude, Abū Dharr left for Damascus.<sup>8</sup>

Considering these narratives, it is clear that Abū Dharr joined the conquests in Syria and, after some time, returned to Medina for pilgrimage. He stayed in Medina for a while and when he saw that the buildings in Medina reached the foot of Salḥ, he asked ʿUthmān for permission to leave Medina for Damascus because the Prophet had told him to do so.<sup>9</sup> In fact, according to the account that is mentioned in *al-Mustadrak* and accepted as authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*), Umm Dharr, Abū Dharr’s wife, said that ʿUthmān did not exile Abū Dharr; rather he left Medina and went to Damascus on the advice of the Prophet.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore after Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, he asked

<sup>8</sup> Abū I-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhabab wa-maʿādin al-jawbar* (ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1973), II, 348-349.

<sup>9</sup> Also Rihan says, Abū Dharr spent his time mostly in Syria and in Egypt under the Caliphate of ʿUmar (13-23 AH). He came back for a short period to Medina on ʿUthmān’s accession to power. He, however, did not remain there for long and asked the caliph to let him to go to Damascus. See Mohammad Rihan, *The Politics and Culture of an Umayyad Tribe: Conflict and Factionalism in the Early Islamic Period* (London & New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 147-148.

<sup>10</sup> For the word of the Prophet that Abū Dharr would leave Medina; see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥākim al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ʿalā l-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (ed. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādīʿi; Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaramayn, 1997), III, 420; also see Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-masbābir wa-l-aʿlām* (ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām al-Tadmūrī; Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987), III ʿ(ʿAhd al-khulafāʾ) al-rāshidīn: Ḥawādith wa-wafayāt 11-40 H.), 412.

permission from the Caliph for the same reason and went to al-Rabadha.<sup>11</sup>

## II

After Abū Dharr returned from Medina to Damascus, he criticized Mu‘āwiya as well as the Muslims who hoarded surplus wealth and did not spend it in the way of Allah. In his criticisms he recited a verse (34) from sūrat al-Tawba as evidence.<sup>12</sup> His views attracted attention from poor people and those who opposed the government. Therefore an opposition movement began against the government and the rich. After this Abū Dharr fell out with Mu‘āwiya. Historical sources provide narratives about Mu‘āwiya sending Abū Dharr from Damascus to Medina. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) said that many things have been recorded about why he sent him into exile and most of which he is unwilling to mention. After making this statement, al-Ṭabarī cited an account by Sayf ibn ‘Umar. Accordingly, when ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba<sup>13</sup> came to Damascus he met<sup>14</sup> Abū Dharr and said, “Abū

<sup>11</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 284; *The History of al-Ṭabarī An Annotated Translation*, vol. XV: *The Crisis of the Early Caliphate, The Reign of ‘Uthmān A.D. 644-656/A.H 24-35* (translated into English and annotated by R. Stephen Humphreys; Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 66; Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn al-musammā Dīwān al-mubtada’ wa-l-khabar fi tārīkh al-‘Arab wa-l-Barbar wa-man ‘āsharabum min dbawī l-sba’n al-akbar* (eds. Khalīl Shihāda and Suhayl Zakkār; Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2000), II, 588.

<sup>12</sup> “O you, who believe! Lo! Many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devout the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah. They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muḥammad) of a painful doom.” According to al-Ṭabarī, this verse is both of particular and of general application. It is of particular application to those Muslims who do not pay the poor-rate on their property and to Jews and Christians who are infidels; see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āy al-Qur’ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), IX, 117-122. Al-Rāzī however, as Cameron says, mentioned three cases: this verse alludes to rabbis and monks, b) to those Muslims who were niggardly with regard to the poor-rate, and c) to all those who hoarded wealth and did not produce the imposts whether they were rabbis, monks, or Muslims; see Abū ‘Abd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-mushabbar bi-l-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1990), XVI, 36; also see Alan John Cameron, *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: An Examination of His Image in the Hagiography of Islam* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1982), 73-74.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ also was called Ibn al-Sawdā’, Ibn Ḥarb, and Ibn Wahb.

Dharr, are you surprised by Mu‘āwiya saying ‘the public money is God’s property (*al-māl māl Allāb*)?’<sup>15</sup> No doubt, everything belongs

However, it is not clear whether he was a real personality. Sayf ibn ‘Umar, one of al-Tabarī’s sources, was the chief authority for Ibn Saba’s political activity against Caliph ‘Uthmān; see M. G. Hodgson, “‘Abd Allāh b. Saba’,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, I, 51. Without entering debates on the historical existence of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, I refer to Yūsuf al-‘Ishsh’s substantial findings on the main narratives related to the events of *fitna* which occurred in the time of Caliph ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. The reports regarding these events have reached us mainly through three narrators, Abū Mikhnaf, al-Wāqidī, and Sayf ibn ‘Umar. Although these three narrators transmitted the same events, there are significant differences in their reports. In addition they have been criticized by *muḥaddithūn*. Because of this, al-‘Ishsh says that these narratives must be compared with other reliable reports that mention the same events to decide which is true. For this purpose he identified three reports narrated by eyewitnesses of the events. These reports belong to Abū Usayd al-Anṣārī’s *mawlā* Abū Sa‘īd, Aḥnaf ibn Qays, and Abū Khunays Saḥm al-Azdī. Finally, he compared these reports with three other narratives and concluded that the narratives by Sayf ibn ‘Umar point in the same direction of these three reliable reports. For more information see Yūsuf al-‘Ishsh, *al-Dawla al-Umawīyya wa-l-ahḍāth allatī sabaqathā wa-mabbadat labā ibtidā<sup>min</sup> min fitnat ‘Uthmān* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 33-40, 65 ff. It must be noted that some scholars who consider the differences between the historical narratives and *ḥadīths*, state that Sayf is an authority and *imām* on history; see al-Dhababī, *Mizān al-i‘tidāl fī naqd al-rijāl* (ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī; Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 1963), II, 255; Abū l-Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Tabḍīb* (ed. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb ‘Abd al-Laṭīf; 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 1975), I, 344. Also see Fayda, “Seyf b. Ömer,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXXVII, 37.

<sup>14</sup> Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı argues that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ did not meet with Abū Dharr because Abū Dharr died in 31/651 or 32/652 in al-Rabadha. Ibn Saba’ appeared in 32/653 or 33/654. In that case, how could ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ meet with Abū Dharr? See Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı, “The Problem of Abd-Allah Ibn-Saba,” *İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi* 5 (1982), 385-386.

<sup>15</sup> Wilferd Madelung has connected, as Sean W. Anthony states, the term *māl Allāb* with the caliphal title *khalīfat Allāb*; see Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 84. Anthony criticizes two aspects of Madelung’s argument. The first one is that this term is redolent of the events that occurred in al-Kūfa, particularly Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Ās’ declaration of *Sawād* and ‘Uthmān’s expression to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd about *bayt al-māl*. The second is that this articulation of *māl Allāb*, which is attributed to Ibn al-Sawdā’, appears only in Sayf’s narrative about Abū Dharr; see Sean W. Anthony, *The Caliph and the Heretic: Ibn Saba’ and the Origins of Shi‘ism* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 56, also fn. 130. Madelung’s

to God. But he intends to seize it for himself by the exclusion of Muslims and to delete the Muslims’ names from the fiscal registers.” Abū Dharr came to Mu‘āwiya and said, “What leads you to use the term ‘God’s property’ for the public money of the Muslims?” Mu‘āwiya responded “God be merciful to you Abū Dharr. Are we not God’s slaves, the public money His property, the created world His creation and public authority His authority?” Abū Dharr said, “Do not use this expression.” Mu‘āwiya said “Indeed, I do not say that the public money does not belong to God, but I shall call it ‘the property of the Muslims.’” After that Abū Dharr continued to warn the rich to aid the poor people and said “There will be branding irons from a fire to those who treasure up gold and silver and do not expend them in the way of God, and with this iron their foreheads, sides, and backs shall be branded.” Because of his words, the poor people were angry at the rich and they remained in a difficult situation. The rich people who were uncomfortable, came to Mu‘āwiya and reported their discomforts. Mu‘āwiya reported to ‘Uthmān that Abū Dharr rendered him helpless. ‘Uthmān wrote to him in response: “Verily, dissension (*fitna*) has protruded its snout and eyes and poised to jump. Do not scrape the scab, but rather dispatch Abū Dharr to me. Send a guide along with him, give him adequate provisions, and treat him gently. Restrain the people and yourself as far as you can, for you will keep control of affairs only so long as you keep control of yourself.” Thus, Mu‘āwiya sent Abū Dharr with a guide to Medina.<sup>16</sup>

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claim is difficult to accept because it refers to the very early period. On the other hand, Anthony as well uses arguments that concern two events that occurred in al-Kūfa in the very early period. Furthermore his first argument seems to be a far-fetched comment.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 283-284; *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, XV, 64-65; also see Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh* (ed. C. Johannes Tornberg; Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965), III, 114-115. Hishām Ja‘īṭ argues, without justification, that this narrative by Sayf ibn ‘Umar cannot be accepted; see his *al-Fitna: Jadaliyyat al-dīn wa-l-siyāsa fī l-Islām al-mubakkir* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, 2000), 75, fn. 1. Mahmut Kelpetin evaluated this narrative in a different way and criticized Sayf ibn ‘Umar by arguing that in this narrative it is meant to be explained that Abū Dharr in point of fact did not think about the subject like this. Abū Dharr influenced by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’, criticized first Mu‘āwiya and then Caliph ‘Uthmān. In continuation of his remark, Kelpetin claimed that the reason that impelled Sayf to such a depiction was that Abū Dharr had been exiled; see his *Hulefâ-yi Râşidîn Dönemi Tarîhi: Seyf b. Ömer ve Tarîhçiliği* (Istanbul: Siyer Yayınları, 2012), 250. However, Ahmet Güzel

Before addressing the events that occurred after Abū Dharr had arrived in Medina, I will note other narratives that mentioned different events that caused him to be sent to Medina. Mu‘āwiya built a palace in Damascus, which was called al-Khadrā’. Abū Dharr criticized him by saying that if it was built with public money it was betrayal and if it was built with his own money it was a waste. His criticism against Mu‘āwiya continued. Ḥabīb ibn Maslama<sup>17</sup> (d. 42/662) came to Mu‘āwiya and informed him that Abū Dharr was inciting the populace of Damascus against him. He recommended that Mu‘āwiya exile Abū Dharr and his family if necessary. Mu‘āwiya wrote a letter to ‘Uthmān and said that he wanted to dispatch Abū Dharr to Medina. ‘Uthmān accepted his offer and ordered Mu‘āwiya to convey him to Medina [in contrast to the previous narrative] on the roughest mount.<sup>18</sup> It was also reported by al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 292/905) that Abū Dharr was sent to Medina for another reason. Abū Dharr used to sit in the mosque and went on to make the previously reported statements. People crowded around in growing numbers to hear him. Furthermore he stood at the door of Damascus when he prayed the morning

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claimed that it was not reasonable that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ inculcated Abū Dharr on Mu‘āwiya. Abū Dharr was one of the first Muslims, hence further explanation is needed that he was carried away by the incitement of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’; see his “Mu‘āviye ve Hz. Osman’a Muhalefeti Ekseninde Ebû Zerr el-Ğifârî,” *Marife* 12/3 (2012), 60. If the *one-sentence speech* between Abū Dharr and Ibn Saba’ in the first part of the narrative and the main discussion between Abū Dharr and Mu‘āwiya on the *sabab al-nuzûl* of the verse (34) from sûrat al-Tawba are taken into account, however, it is clear that Abū Dharr has a distinctive opinion about *kanz* and *infâq*. Therefore it is rather difficult to talk about the incitement or the effect of Ibn Saba’ on Abū Dharr. Hence, it could be said that Abū Dharr encountered Ibn Saba’ who told him about some practices of Mu‘āwiya which he was unfamiliar. After that he went to Mu‘āwiya and argued with him over this. Any other claim would be a forced interpretation of the narrative.

<sup>17</sup> Ḥabīb ibn Maslama, born in Mecca in 610 or 620 AD, was a companion of the Prophet. He joined the conquest of Syria and distinguished himself in the fights against the Byzantines. By order of Mu‘āwiya, he conquered Armenia in 22/642. He was one of the persons who Mu‘āwiya consulted, and was a brave commander. After ‘Uthmān’s death, he supported Mu‘āwiya against ‘Alī. He was appointed as a governor of Armenia in 41/661 and died there in 42/662; see Asri Çubukçu, “Ḥabīb b. Mesleme,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XIV, 372-373. Fück has argued that he was not a companion of the Prophet; see J. W. Fück, “Ḥabīb b. Maslama,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, III, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 53; also see Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad Ibn A‘tham al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-futūḥ* (ed. ‘Alī Shīrī; Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā’, 1991), I, 374.



prayer and said: “The train carrying the fire came. God may curse those who advise good but they themselves avoid it, and those who desist others from evil but they themselves act upon it.” Mu‘āwiya wrote to ‘Uthmān, saying, “You have incited Damascus against yourself through Abū Dharr.” ‘Uthmān wrote back telling him to set Abū Dharr on a packsaddle without a cover and send him to Medina.<sup>19</sup>

When Abū Dharr reached Medina, he entered ‘Uthmān’s presence, and ‘Uthmān said “O Abū Dharr, why are the Syrians complaining about your sharp tongue?” Abū Dharr described what had happened. ‘Uthmān explained his policy of not forcing people to be ascetics, rather he was required to invoke them to care about God’s commandments and to follow the path of moderation. Abū Dharr then asked permission to leave Medina. ‘Uthmān replied that if he wanted, he could stay in a place close to there. But Abū Dharr said that the Prophet commanded him to leave Medina when the buildings reached Sal’. ‘Uthmān replied that it would be good to do as the Prophet commanded him. Abū Dharr settled in al-Rabadha and Caliph ‘Uthmān gave him a small herd of camels and two slaves, and instructed him to come to Medina occasionally to avoid getting used to the customs of Bedouins.<sup>20</sup>

In the conversation mentioned above, ‘Uthmān explained as a caliph his limits of power in matters of financial skill. As Aḥmad Jawdat Pasha (d. 1895) says, although ‘Uthmān was a caliph; he did not have

<sup>19</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tāriḫ*, II, 171-172.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tāriḫ*, IV, 284; *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, XV, 65-66; also see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 115. Keaney has argued that this narrative is the typical Sayf account in which ‘Uthmān is portrayed as an ideal ruler, responding promptly and wisely to complaints in the provinces and trying to find a just solution. In continuation of her remark, she claims “Sayf thus brings a *faḍā’il* sensibility of ‘Uthmān and key companions to bear on issues of political policy. While the ruler is not shown exercising religious authority, there is no tension in Sayf between politics and piety, between secular and sacred authority. While this was the ideal believed to have been modeled by Muḥammad, by the third/ninth century, the situation in practice was very different.” See Heather N. Keaney, *Medieval Islamic Historiography: Remembering Rebellion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 38. Keaney’s approach, which attempts to interpret Sayf’s account on the basis of two modern concepts, *secular* and *sacred*, is disputable because it is unfeasible to evaluate the early era of Islamic history with such concepts, particularly, if there is no hint of religious and political *distinction* in the state administration. Additionally, there is no doubt that this point of view would bring about anachronism.

the authority to distribute the surplus wealth that was in the hands of the rich Muslims giving their alms. Because they gave their alms, they could acquire possessions.<sup>21</sup>

In the historical sources other accounts were also narrated about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha on his own request. The reliable account on this subject is reported by Zayd ibn Wahb (d. 83/702). According to this narrative, Zayd ibn Wahb went through al-Rabadha and encountered Abū Dharr. He asked what had moved him to settle there and Abū Dharr replied that when he was in Damascus, he recited a verse (34) from sūrat al-Tawba. Mu‘āwiya argued that it did not concern Muslims but rather Jews and Christians. However Abū Dharr declared that it was revealed concerning Muslims as well as Jews and Christians. Mu‘āwiya then wrote to ‘Uthmān complaining about him, so the Caliph wrote to Abū Dharr to come to Medina. When Abū Dharr arrived in Medina, the people gathered around him as if they had never seen him before. Abū Dharr explained to ‘Uthmān what had happened between him and Mu‘āwiya. Upon this, ‘Uthmān told him that if he so wished he could relocate to a spot where he would be a neighbor. Zayd ibn Wahb said “That is what moved Abū Dharr to settle in al-Rabadha.” At the end of the narrative Abū Dharr says that if an Abyssinian were to be invested with authority he would hear and obey him.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, the commentator of al-Bukhārī, said of the narrative by Zayd ibn Wahb that although ‘Uthmān had wanted Abū Dharr to leave Medina out of fear of the spread of *fitna*, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request.<sup>23</sup> Al-Qaṣṭallānī, another *shāriḥ* of al-Bukhārī, said that some people condemned ‘Uthmān because he sent Abū Dharr into exile. Zayd ibn Wahb asked Abū Dharr about this matter and Abū Dharr explained what happened. Accordingly, al-Qaṣṭallānī mentioned that Mu‘āwiya’s soldiers tended to Abū Dharr, and that Mu‘āwiya was afraid of conflict between the Muslims. ‘Uthmān also feared the people of Medina as much as

<sup>21</sup> Aḥmad Jawdat Pasha, *Kıyas-ı Enbiyâ ve Tevârib-i Hulefâ* (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1966), I, 455; also see Âdem Apak, *Hız. Osman Dönemi Devlet Siyaseti* (Istanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 156.

<sup>22</sup> Al-Bukhārī, “Zakât,” 4; also see Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d ibn Manī‘ al-Zuhrī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās; Beirut: Dār Şādir, 1957-1968), IV, 226; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān*, X, 121-122; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārikh*, LXVI, 198.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-bārī bi-sharḥ Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī et al.; Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, n.d.), III, 274.

Mu‘āwiya had feared the people of Damascus. Because of this, Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own choice.<sup>24</sup>

Although there are alternative narratives mentioned by al-Ya‘qūbī, al-Balādhurī, Ibn A‘tham, and al-Mas‘ūdī that have many irreconcilable contrasts with the account by Zayd ibn Wahb al-Juhanī, the latter should be superior to others in terms of three aspects: (1) Zayd ibn Wahb is an eyewitness and one of the main sources of these events. Because he met with Abū Dharr in al-Rabadha and talked with him about the matter, then narrated what occurred between Abū Dharr and Caliph ‘Uthmān and why and how Abū Dharr came to Medina and then departed from Medina to al-Rabadha. (2) There are other reliable accounts that have parallels with Zayd’s account. For instance, according to the narrative by Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn,<sup>25</sup> after Abū Dharr came to Medina, he warned ‘Uthmān as he had warned Mu‘āwiya in Damascus. However, when Abū Dharr saw that ‘Uthmān did not incline to him, he went to al-Rabadha on his own request, and Mu‘āwiya sent his household after him.<sup>26</sup> It is also narrated by ‘Abd al-Allāh ibn al-Šāmit,<sup>27</sup> Abū Dharr’s nephew, that Abū Dharr himself asked ‘Uthmān to allow him stay in al-Rabadha.<sup>28</sup> Ibn Shabba (d. 262/876) mentioned that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) was asked if Abū Dharr was exiled by ‘Uthmān, and he replied “No, God forbid! (*Lā ma‘ādḥ Allāb*).”<sup>29</sup> (3) Zayd ibn Wahb, who converted to Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet (although he never met him), was prominent among the *tābi‘ūn* (successors). He has been accepted as *thiqa* (trustworthy) and reported many *ḥadīths* from some of the

<sup>24</sup> Abū l-‘Abbās Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irsbād al-sāri li-sbarḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukḥārī* (Būlāq: al-Maṭba‘a al-Maymaniyya, 1304 H.), III, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, *mawlā* of Anas ibn Mālik, has been accepted as *thiqa* (trustworthy). He had narrated from some of the *ṣaḥāba* such as Abū Hurayra and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar. Al-Sha‘bī and Qatāda also narrated from him; see Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 193; Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukḥārī, *al-Tāriḫ al-kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1986), I, 90.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Ṭabarī, *Tāriḫ*, IV, 284-285; *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, XV, 67.

<sup>27</sup> He is from the *tābi‘ūn* and has been accepted as *thiqa*; see al-Bukḥārī, *al-Tāriḫ al-kabīr*, V, 118; al-‘Ijlī, *Ma‘rifat al-thiqāt*, II, 38.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, IV, 232.

<sup>29</sup> Abū Zayd ‘Umar ibn Shabba al-Numayrī al-Baṣrī, *Tāriḫ al-Madīna al-munawwara* (ed. Fahīm Muḥammad Shaltūt; Jeddah: Dār al-Iṣfahānī, 1979), III, 1037; also see Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 115.

*şahāba* such as ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.<sup>30</sup>

This account by Zayd ibn Wahb is also accepted as reliable by modern scholars. For instance, Cameron mentions that the earliest available and reliable account on this subject is narrated by Zayd ibn Wahb, who tells us, quite briefly, that Abū Dharr settled in al-Rabadha because of a difference of opinion with Muʿāwiya on the interpretation of verse 34 of sūrat al-Tawba.<sup>31</sup> Cameron also explained his contention that Abū Dharr's controversy was with the whole class of those who secularized the theocracy of Islam and that due to the failure of his preaching he withdrew from Damascus to Medina and thence to al-Rabadha.<sup>32</sup> According to Amḥazūn, this narrative is the most reliable account among those about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha.<sup>33</sup> Considering this narrative, Yiğit states that Abū Dharr had been sent by Caliph ʿUthmān to al-Rabadha on his own request.<sup>34</sup> However, Aydınlı argues that Caliph ʿUthmān chose al-Rabadha, because of its solitude and because some acquaintances of Abū Dharr were living there. It cannot be determined, however, who made this decision about Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast to the narratives above, there are some accounts about Abū Dharr being sent by Caliph ʿUthmān to al-Rabadha as an exile. According to the narrative by al-Yaʿqūbī, when Abū Dharr arrived in

<sup>30</sup> Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 102-103; al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, III, 407; Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Şālih al-ʿIjlī, *Maʿrifat al-tbiqāt min rijāl abl al-ʿilm wa-l-ḥadīth wa-min al-ḥuʿafāʾ wa-dbikr madhābibibim wa-akbbāribim* (ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm ʿAbd al-ʿAzīm al-Bastawī; Medina: Maktabat al-Dār, 1985), I, 379.

<sup>31</sup> Cameron, *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī*, 64, 66.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> Muḥammad Amḥazūn, *Tabḥīq mawāqif al-şahāba fi l-fitna min riwāyāt al-Imām al-Ṭabarī wa-l-muḥaddithīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007), 330.

<sup>34</sup> İsmail Yiğit, "Osman," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXXIII, 438; also see Khalil İbrāhīm Jāsim, "Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: Jadaliyyat al-dhāt wa-l-mujtamaʿ," *Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī* 51/3 (2004), 205.

<sup>35</sup> Abdullah Aydınlı, "Ebū Zer el-Gifārī," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, X, 267. Jobson, without making any preference, has indicated that Abū Dharr retired or was sent to al-Rabadha where he died in 32/652-653 or 31; see J. Jobson, "Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, I, 114. The opinion of Güzel, however, is similar to that of Aydınlı; he argues that al-Rabadha was chosen by Abū Dharr; see "Muʿāviye ve Hz. Osman'a Muhalefeti Ekseninde Ebū Zer al-Gifārī," 52-54.

Medina, he said that the Prophet Muḥammad, in warning the people of the malicious rule of the Umayyads, said, “When the children of Abū l-‘Āṣ reach the number of thirty, they make the Islamic treasury as their own and the servants of God as their slaves.” ‘Uthmān said that he had heard that Abū Dharr narrated this *ḥadīth*. Abū Dharr replied that he heard the Prophet saying it. Upon this, ‘Uthmān asked ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib whether he had heard the Prophet say what Abū Dharr narrated. ‘Alī replied in the affirmative and said that according to the word of the Prophet, greenery (*al-khaḍrāʾ*) never shaded and earth never bore a man more upright than Abū Dharr. After this conversation Abū Dharr stayed a few days in Medina until ‘Uthmān commanded him to leave Medina. Upon this, Abū Dharr asked the Caliph whether he would expel him from the sacred city of the Prophet. ‘Uthmān replied that he would. So, Abū Dharr countered by saying that he would go to Mecca. The Caliph rejected this, and Abū Dharr said “To al-Baṣra.” However ‘Uthmān replied “No,” so he said “To al-Kūfa.” Again ‘Uthmān did not accept and replied, “I send you to al-Rabadha where you came from and where you will die.” He then commanded his cousin Marwān to take him off.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II, 171-172; also see al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 54; Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 374-375; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhbab*, II, 349-350. This narrative related to the Umayyads is mentioned in some sources. Al-Dhahabī said that it was *munqati‘* (disconnected); see al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, IV, 647. Cameron associates Abū Dharr’s request to go to al-Kūfa with ‘Alī’s residence there; see *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī*, 87. In some narratives, it is said that Abū Dharr was subjected to ill-treatment by Marwān and a quarrel occurred between ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Marwān. Accordingly, ‘Uthmān told Marwān to lead Abū Dharr away and ordered him not to let him talk to anyone. After they left there, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his two sons as well as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir went out with him. Abū Dharr went up to ‘Alī, kissed his hand and wept, saying that when he saw him and his son, he was reminded of the saying of the Prophet, and that he could not be patient and wept. ‘Alī also spoke to him, but Marwān tried to prevent him by saying that the Commander of the Faithful had forbidden anyone to speak to Abū Dharr. Thereupon ‘Alī raised his whip and struck Marwān’s camel in the face saying “Get out of my sight! May God cast you into the fire!” Then ‘Alī escorted Abū Dharr. Because of this matter, the relations between ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī became strained; see al-Ya‘qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II, 171-172; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 54; Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 376; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dhbab*, II, 350. Vaglieri, based on this narrative, has argued that when Abū Dharr was exiled from Medina because of ‘Alī’s salutation to Abū Dharr in spite of ‘Uthmān’s prohibition, a violent dispute occurred between ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān;

As Milḥim rightly argues, this narrative reflects al-Ya‘qūbī’s negative approach against Caliph ‘Uthman and the Umayyads. Al-Ya‘qūbī tried to confirm the word of the Prophet about the Umayyads, which he based on Abū Dharr, with the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet praises Abū Dharr.<sup>37</sup> In this point it should be kept in mind that a number of reports were narrated both in favor of the Umayyads and against them, and that most of them were fabricated due to political events.<sup>38</sup>

It is also said that when Abū Dharr reached Medina, he began criticizing ‘Uthmān because he appointed some people in governmental affairs, who did not reach the age of maturity,<sup>39</sup> because of his establishment of state land (*ḥimā*)<sup>40</sup> and because of creation of close ties with *al-ṭulaqā*.<sup>41</sup> Due to his criticism, ‘Uthmān ordered him to leave the city. Thereupon Abū Dharr said, “To Mecca.” ‘Uthmān replied, “No”. So he said, “To Jerusalem.” Again ‘Uthmān did not accept. So Abū Dharr said “To one of two cities [al-Kūfa or al-Baṣra].” ‘Uthmān

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see L. Veccia Vaglieri, “‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, I, 382. It is clear in this narrative that ‘Alī has been presented as a person who opposed Caliph ‘Uthmān. Therefore these and similar narratives were clearly produced as a result of the efforts to bring ‘Alī against ‘Uthmān.

<sup>37</sup> ‘Adnān Muḥammad Milḥim, *al-Mu’arrikhūn al-‘Arab wa-l-fitna al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalī‘a, 1998), 128.

<sup>38</sup> For further information concerning this kind of narratives, see İrfan Aycan, *Saltanata Giden Yolda Muaviye bin Ebî Süfyan* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2001), 34-45; also see Apak, *Hız. Osman Dönemi Devlet Siyaseti*, 156.

<sup>39</sup> The reason of Abū Dharr’s criticism was that although Marwān was under age, ‘Uthmān appointed him as *kātib*. Thus when he was the Caliph’s *kātib*, he should be in his twenties; see Aycan, “Mervān I,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslām Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XXIX, 225.

<sup>40</sup> The *ḥimā* is the land that is open to everyone for grazing of animals, and that is prohibited to appropriate of property; see Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya wa-l-wilāyāt al-dīniyya* (ed. Aḥmad Mubārak al-Baghdādī; Kuwait: Dār Ibn Qutayba, 1989), 242. The institution dates back to the pre-Islamic Arab society. To protect their flocks from the ill-effects of drought, the powerful nomadic lords used to reserve to themselves the grazing and watering rights in certain rich pasturages. For more information see J. Chelhod, “Ḥimā,” *The Encyclopaedia of Islam Second Edition*, III, 393; Mustafa Demirci, *İslamın İlk Üç Asrında Toprak Sistemi* (Istanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2003), 174-186.

<sup>41</sup> *Al-ṭulaqā*’ was the name given to people who became Muslim after the conquest of Mecca and were not treated as captives; see Abū l-Faḍl Ibn Manzūr ibn Mukarram Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī al-Miṣrī, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955-1956), “ṭlq” s.v.; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 61.

replied, “I exile you to al-Rabadha.” which he eventually did. Abū Dharr lived in al-Rabadha until he died.<sup>42</sup>

Madelung argues on the basis of the narrative by al-Balādhurī that ‘Uthmān ordered Abū Dharr to be sent to Medina by Mu‘āwiya and, as Abū Dharr continued his ‘agitation,’ he was exiled to al-Rabadha in the desert.<sup>43</sup> Balcı has mentioned almost all narratives without making any distinction between them and asserts that the true essence of Abū Dharr going to al-Rabadha is not clear. However, he claims that according to the flow of events, Abū Dharr was forced to leave the city and he had let this decision pass unchallenged because he knew himself as a person who caused *fitna*.<sup>44</sup> Jabali did not comment on other narratives, but considering the narrative by Ibn A‘tham he argues that this exile was one of ‘Uthmān’s policies and seems to indicate that it was ‘Uthmān who forced Abū Dharr to leave Medina and that it was ‘Uthmān who sent him into exile outside the city.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 52-53. It is also narrated in *Ansāb al-asbrāf* that when Abū Dharr came to Medina from Damascus, ‘Uthmān said to him that it was better for him that they stay together than remain apart ‘Uthmān also gave him some milch camels. However, Abū Dharr said that he had no need of this and he went al-Rabadha and died there.

<sup>43</sup> Madelung mentions that the Kūfan and Baṣran traditions mostly affirm that Abū Dharr was exiled by ‘Uthmān against his own will. As for the Medinan tradition, it was divided into the Sunnī and the Shī‘ī. According to the former, the Sunnī, Abū Dharr went voluntarily. According to the second, the Shī‘ī tradition, which is the tradition of al-Wāqidi, he was exiled by ‘Uthmān against his will; see Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad*, 84, fn. 24. Madelung has also argued that ‘Uthmān mistreated Abū Dharr arrogantly as well as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir; see *ibid.*, 87. If his relied upon account which is narrated by al-Balādhurī from al-Wāqidi, is taken into consideration, it is understood that he prefers the Shī‘ī tradition of Medina.

<sup>44</sup> İsrâfil Balcı, “Bir Yalnız Sahabi Ebû Zer el-Gifârî,” *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 10 (1998), 380-381.

<sup>45</sup> Fu‘ad Jabali, *The Companions of The Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2003), 155, also fn. 93. Other scholars have argued that Abū Dharr was exiled by Caliph ‘Uthmān. For instance see Fiğlalı, “Ali,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, II, 372; Fayda, “Hulefâ-yi Râşidîn,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, XVIII, 330.

## III

Lastly, we would like to note some other narratives with doubtful reliability. These narratives note that some prominent *ṣaḥāba* such as ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf criticized ‘Uthmān due to his policy on Abū Dharr. According to a narrative by al-Balādhurī, after Abū Dharr had died in al-Rabadha, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib went to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf and accused him by saying that he had elected ‘Uthmān as a caliph. Thereupon ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf replied, “O ‘Alī! If you want take your sword I will also take my sword. Because ‘Uthmān did not keep his promise he had given me.” After that, he expressed his deep remorse in choosing ‘Uthmān as a caliph.<sup>46</sup>

As mentioned above, after Abū Dharr died in al-Rabadha, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib held ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf responsible for this event. Despite this ‘Alī did not react to him when Abū Dharr was “exiled” to al-Rabadha. Therefore, a reaction of ‘Alī to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān after two or three years is not plausible. Furthermore there is no account, except the narrative by al-Balādhurī that mentions ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s criticism of ‘Uthmān on Abū Dharr’s death in al-Rabadha. His words, which are related to taking his sword, are narrated on other events. For instance in a narrative by Ibn A‘tham<sup>47</sup> ‘Abd al-Raḥmān used the same expressions when he criticized ‘Uthmān because of his donation from *bayt al-māl* to his close relatives. Therefore this situation casts a shadow on the reliability of this narrative.<sup>48</sup> The existence of some accounts noting that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had died earlier than Abū Dharr increases the doubts about this narrative.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 57. In this passage ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf allegedly refers to the question he posed to ‘Uthmān before his election of caliph. In the *shūrā* council appointed by Caliph ‘Umar, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf asked, “Will you give me your oath based on the Qur’ān, the practice of his Prophet and the deeds of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.” ‘Uthmān replied, “Yes indeed.”

<sup>47</sup> Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 371.

<sup>48</sup> For the narratives about Caliph ‘Uthmān’s donation to his close relatives and assessment of them see Millḥim, *al-Mu’arrikhūn al-‘Arab*, 96 ff.

<sup>49</sup> According to an account by Ibn ‘Asākir, Abū Dharr came to ‘Uthmān one day and the inheritance that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān had left at his demise, was being distributed by ‘Uthmān. Caliph ‘Uthmān said to Ka‘b al-Akhbār, “O Abū Ishāq! Do you see the goods which are given its alms? Shall the owner [‘Abd al-Raḥmān] be accountable for these goods?” Ka‘b confirmed that which the Caliph had said. Thereupon Abū Dharr raised his stick and struck Ka‘b’s head while saying to him



## IV

When the accounts above are considered together, it is understood that the matter of whether Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request or by exile is very controversial. Nonetheless three main points must be noted about the narratives regarding the matter: The first is that these accounts can be divided into three main groups: Abū Mikhnaf Lūṭ ibn Yaḥyā (d. 157/773-774), Sayf ibn ‘Umar (d. 180/774), and Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823). The books of these historians, *akhbārīyyūn*, have been largely lost but they have reached us from the next generation of historians such as al-Ya‘qūbī, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī. Here it must be noted that Sayf’s accounts were narrated only by al-Ṭabarī, and that although al-Balādhurī narrated from Sayf in *Futūḥ al-buldān*,<sup>50</sup> he ignored his accounts about incidents of the *fitna* in *Ansāb al-asbrāf*. Sayf, unlike the others, did not implicate the *ṣahāba* in the events of *fitna* and defended the caliphate of ‘Uthmān. Furthermore, he emphasized the unity of Islamic *umma*. The reason for al-Ṭabarī’s choice is derived from his approach to the events; his viewpoint has parallels with that of Sayf. The best example of this can be seen in his expression “many things have been recorded as to why he sent him into exile, most of which I am loathe to mention.” As for other historians, if al-Ya‘qūbī who did not disclose his sources regarding the events of *fitna*, is excluded, al-Balādhurī, Ibn A‘tham, and al-Mas‘ūdī, a later historian who apparently benefited from al-Ya‘qūbī and al-Balādhurī, come to the forefront. A common feature of these historians is that their accounts mainly follow the tradition of al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf who were pro-Shi‘ite.<sup>51</sup> This aspect is clearly understood through the ac-

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“Son of a Jew! Do you think that he will not be accountable because of his goods of which he had paid its alms?” He then recited some verses to him; see Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārikh*, LXVI, 197; also see Ibn Shabba, *Tārikh*, III, 1036-1037; al-Dhababī, *Tārikh al-Islām*, 411.

<sup>50</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 354, 431.

<sup>51</sup> It is seen that the major sources of Imāmiyya rely on al-Wāqidī (i.e., the Shī‘ī tradition of Medina) and al-Ya‘qūbī; see Abū l-Qāsim ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *al-Shāfi fi l-imāma* (ed. ‘Abd al-Zahrā’ al-Ḥusaynī al-Khaṭīb; Tehran: Mu‘assasat al-Ṣādiq, 1986), IV, 293-300; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, *Nahj al-ḥaqq wa-kashf al-ṣidq* (ed. ‘Ayn Allāh al-Ḥasanī al-Urmawī; Qum: Mu‘assasat Dār al-Hijra, 1986), 298-301. For the Imāmi perspective on this issue see Mehmet Salih Arı, *İmamiye Şiası Kaynaklarına Göre İlk Üç Halife* (Istanbul: Düşün Yayıncılık, 2011), 492-498.

counts of the period of *fitna*, which are narrated by them. In fact, according to these narratives Abū Dharr is always represented as a *ṣaḥabī* protesting the “corruption” of ‘Uthmān’s regime and calling for a restoration of the ascetic piety and social equality of the community. It must be emphasized that a general characteristic of these accounts is that ‘Alī has an important and positive role in the events, and he is reflected as a companion who supported the Caliph ‘Uthmān despite his many mistakes and who interceded on Abū Dharr’s behalf.

The second is that the text which Sayf provided is most coherent one. As for the other narratives, Abū Dharr was exiled to Damascus as well as al-Rabadha. However within the framework of narratives, the matter that cannot be resolved is that the same reasons<sup>52</sup> are associated with both his exile to Damascus and to al-Rabadha. Additionally, in these accounts, different justifications have been argued about Abū Dharr’s exile to al-Rabadha, so they have contradictions. Therefore this case weakens the reliability of the accounts and renders the subject incomprehensible.

The third is that some contemporary scholars, such as al-Ghabbān<sup>53</sup> and Amḥazūn,<sup>54</sup> have found that the *isnād* of the narratives by Ibn Sa‘d, al-Bukhārī, and al-Ṭabarī much more reliable than others. As a result, if all of these are taken into account it is clear that Abū Dharr went to al-Rabadha on his own request.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibn A‘tham, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, I, 375.

<sup>53</sup> Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghabbān, *Fitnat maqṭal ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-‘Ubaykān, 1999), I, 110 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Amḥazūn, *Taḥqīq mawāqif al-ṣaḥāba*, 331 ff.; also see Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Barzanjī, *Ṣaḥīḥ wa-ḍa‘if Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2007), III, 319.

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